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A SHORT

ACCOUNT

OF THE

DEATH

OF

Thomas Hitchens.

By JAMES HITCHENS, *Tinner.*

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Bifveal, near *Redruth*, *Cornwall.*

MY Son, *Thomas Hitchens*, was born *April* 14, 1723. He went to School till he was about ten Years old. From Schoo he went to work at the Stamps, in dreſſing of Tin-Ore, in which Employment he continued about ſix Years. Afterwards he wrought in the Tin-works under ground, till about a Year before his Death.

Death. Then he went to dreſs Tin-leavings for me, having five or ſix Boys under him. At the ſame Time he plow'd, ſow'd, mow'd, reap'd, and managed all my Huſbandry; underſtanding every Thing both as to the Tin and the Land, ſo that we had ſcarce one in the Neighbourhood like him.

2. He was from a Child of a very ſober and a very ſweet Behaviour, and remarkably dutiful to his Parents. But about Nineteen he began to go to Revellings and Hurlings, and ſometimes to be merry with his Companions. Of this I now and then told him, but not ſharply; for I counted both him and his Brother mighty good young Men: And was not a little proud, when People told me, "I had two likely Sons, and as ſtout Men as any in the Pariſh." I thought it beſt therefore to let him have his Liberty; eſpecially as I then ſaw no great Harm in theſe Things.

3. But he had done with theſe, from the Hour he firſt heard the Goſpel of the Grace of God. He then *choſe to ſuffer Affliction with the People of God, rather than to enjoy all the Pleaſures of Sin.* He had no Fear, in the hotteſt of the Perſecution. While the Mob were pulling down the Houſe in which we uſed to meet, he ſtood at a ſmall Diſtance, all the Time, being nothing terrified; and incouraged his Brother and ſaid, "God will deliver us: Only let us truſt in Him." Nor was he at all moved, when the Showers of Stones obliged us to ſtop up all our Windows with whole Deals. One Night we heard a great Tumult and Noiſe as of much People and many Cries. And it was told us, they were at the Houſe of one of our Brethern, who lived about a Quarter of a Mile off: *Thomas* did not take

Time

Time to go the Road Way, (tho' it was exceeding dark;) but ran directly through the Grounds and over the Hedges, till he came to the Houſe. The Mob, hearing the Sound of Feet, ran away, not one being left behind. So, ſaid *Thomas*, the Scripture is fulfilled, *One of you ſhall chaſe a Thouſand*. As he came into the Houſe, the Family too, were preparing to run out of it. But he ſoon convinced them, they had no Cauſe to fear, and they mightily rejoiced together, and praiſed God who had delivered them out of the Hands of unreaſonable and cruel Men. All the Windows and Doors were daſhed in Pieces; but none of the Family hurt at all, notwithſtanding the vaſt Quantities of Stones, which had fallen on all Sides of them. One very large Stone they found in the Cradle, cloſe by a little Child. But the Child was not hurt. So that in all Things they ſaw the Hand of God was over them for Good.

4. About eighteen Months ago, while his Brother *William* and he were working in the Pit with another Man, the Earth calved in upon the Man, who cried out for Help, and *Thomas* ran toward the Place where he was. In running his Light went out; but he found the Man by his Voice, tho' not till he was almoſt covered in. Before he had cleared him, the Earth calved in again, and he was very near covered in himſelf. And but that it ſtopt, they knew not how, in one Minute more they muſt both have periſhed together. *William* hearing the Noiſe, made up to the Place, and in ſome Time relieved them both. Of this *Thomas* often made Mention, praiſing God for his wonderful Deliverance.

5. Some Account of the Manner wherein he found Peace with God, (two or three Months after

after his Brother) I lately found in his Pocket-Book. The Subſtance of it was this:

"In reading the three firſt Chapters of St. *John*, while I was in much trouble and heavineſs of Soul, the Lord gave me great Comfort: Eſpecially from theſe words, *To as many as believe in his Name, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God.* But ſoon after I was ſtript of all, and thought God had left me, a final Caſtaway. Nevertheleſs I went into my Cloſet, and with a heavy Heart ſaid, Lord, I Praiſe thee, that thou haſt not given me over unto Death. But how ſhall I appear before thee? While I ſpoke, the Lord anſwered, and applied theſe Words, *I am thy Righteouſneſs*; which burſt the Cords that before kept my Spirit down."

6. He often complained, That when he found great Joy, he was in the greateſt Danger both of Pride and Lightneſs: And therefore ſaid, He had much rather, if it were the Will of God, be always in a Mourning State. He likewiſe found great Temptation to Pride when he was moſt bleſt in ſpeaking to the People. And this was the main Reaſon of his not ſtirring up the Gift of God which was in him.

7. He frequently repeated thoſe Words of St. *Paul*, *It is good for a Man not to touch a Woman*: And thoſe of *Job*, *I have made a Covenant with my Eyes; why then ſhould I think upon a Maid?* He was very jealous over himſelf when he was in Company with thoſe of a different Sex. And if no Man beſides himſelf was there, he generally quitted the Company as ſoon as he could.

8. In the latter Part of his Life he was much grown in Grace and in the Knowledge of our Lord

Lord Jeſus Chriſt. He ſometimes ſaw, as he ſaid, Anger or Pride in himſelf; but they had no Power: Neither had the Love or Deſire of any Creature; they were all in Subjection under his Feet: he was more and more dead to all earthly Things, and filled with the Fire of God's Love. The Work of God had a deeper Root in his Heart, and he was more ſettled and eſtabliſhed in the Grace of God.

9. After his Brother's Death, he declared he could not reſt thro' the Earneſtneſs of his Deſire to follow him. However, in the mean Time he put in Practice what *Samuel* ſpoke of, namely meeting all the Family once a Week. He reproved me and his Mother in ſeveral Things; but we could not reprove him in any. I could not convince him or *Samuel* of Sin, for two Years or more.

10. On *Wedneſday, Sept.* 10. In the Evening he found himſelf out of Order: He went to Bed ſomething earlier than uſual, and ſoon appeared to be in a high Fever. But his Confidence in God was ſtill the ſame, and all his Words, both that Night and the next Day, convinced all who came near him, that the Peace of God continually ruled in his Heart.

11. On *Thurſday* Evening, between Nine and Ten, his Siſter ſitting by him he ſaid, "Lord, ſhall I call, and wilt Thou not anſwer? No; It cannot be. Thou haſt promiſed, every one that aſks in Faith ſhall receive." Then he began praying for his Father and Mother; for his Brothers and Siſters, and in particular for her that ſat by him. "O my God, marry her to thyſelf. Make her all glorious within. Give her an undivided Heart." He then prayed for himſelf

ſelf. "Now come, O my God, and ſanctify me wholly. Preſs me cloſer to thyſelf. Thou knoweſt, this is all my Deſire. Give me Power to declare thy wonderous Works before I go hence. *O Death, where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory?*

12. As *Mary Biſvine*, came to the bedſide he looked on her and ſaid, "Now I am free. Now my Heart is at Liberty. I will praiſe my God as long as I have Breath." After ſpeaking much to the ſame Effect, he lay ſtill a ſmall Time, and then broke out into exceeding loud, vehement Prayer, his Voice being quite altered and every Sentence pronounced with uncommon Emphaſis. He prayed firſt for all Eſtates and Conditions of Men; that the Church of Chriſt might ſpread over all Nations, that Ten Thouſand Times Ten Thouſand might be converted to God, and all the People of the Earth praiſe him. Then he prayed for all the Miniſters of the Goſpel, from the greateſt even to the leaſt; eſpecially for thoſe whom God had lately employed to ſeek and ſave thoſe that were loſt in *Cornwall*. Afterwards he prayed for *John Trembath* that he might live to the Glory of God, who had brought him back from the Gates of Death, and might be a means of ſaving many Souls from the bitter Pains of Eternal Death. He then prayed for the Society: O Lord, unite them as the Heart of one Man. O Lord give them Eyes to ſee whereinſoever they have departed from Thee. O take from them the Spirit of Unthankfulneſs, and ſuffer them not to bite or devour one another. Heal thou their Backſlidings and ſpread over them the Banner of thy Love!"

13. With Prayer there was continual praiſe intermixt. Sometimes he was bleſſing God for what

what he had done; then praying, "O my God, finiſh thy Work and take me into thy Kingdom. Is this the Day, O my God, that I ſhall kiſs my Brother in Paradiſe?——O Lord, the Angels have already praiſed Thee at my Converſion. Is this the Day that I ſhall praiſe Thee with them? Yes, O my God, I am now going to join them, to ſing Praiſes to thee for ever."

Then he prayed with great Earneſtneſs for *Mary Biſvine* and his own Siſter (both whom he had in the Beginning of the Evening deſired, to ſtay with him till he was in Eternity) that they might never grow weary or faint in their Minds, that God would ſend down the Spirit of Sanctification into their Hearts, and give them reſigned Wills to bear whatever his Providence ſhould lay upon them: Adding, They ſhall run and not be weary. I know we ſhall all meet together, and ſing Praiſes unto him that ſitteth on the Throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever."

He went on, O how good is God to me, that he hath given me a Tongue to praiſe him! A little while, yet a little while, and I ſhall praiſe him in Heaven! O the Goodneſs of God, that I a Worm of the Earth, ſhall ſtand there, upon Mount *Sion*, with the Hundred Forty and Four Thouſand, which *have waſhed their Robes and made them White in the Blood of the Lamb!* Here is a Privilege; here is a Wonder; that I am made a Son of God! I am a Son of God and a Joint-Heir with Chriſt, and I ſhall ſoon be where I ſhall behold him for ever; I, even I, who have been a Backſlider from God! But he has healed my Backſlidings and loved me freely."

14. Soon after he ſaid, I love Thee, O my God, Thou knoweſt that I love Thee, becauſe Thou haſt firſt loved me. O what Manner of Love is this, that God ſhould ſtoop to love me! And he is coming to carry me home. O! I ſee, Thouſands and ten Thouſands of Angels! Do you not ſee them? O Brother *Trembath*, do you not ſee what a glorious Place I am going to? I am going to join with Angels and Arch-angels, and with all the Company of Heaven. I am going to reign with God, among Ten Thouſands of his Saints, and to baſk in the Beams of his Love for ever.

Then looking on *Mary Bryant* he ſaid, Can't you ſee Jeſus Chriſt coming, with an innumerable Company of Angels, and the Golden Banner diſplayed! They are coming to carry me to the Boſom of my God. Open their Eyes O God, that they may ſee them. O what a good God have I ſerved! I am ſanctified, Soul, Body and Spirit. I am whiter than Snow. I am waſhed in the Blood of my Redeemer. Why, I am all God. My Heart is full of God! O let them who hear me now, praiſe Thee for ever and ever."

" And yet I have been unfaithful to my God. For he gave me a Gift, but I improved it not. I thought I was not worthy to ſtand in the Highways and call Sinners to Repentance. But, O God, Thou haſt forgiven me this alſo, and I will preach Thee now as long as I have Breath."

15. He ceaſed not thus praying and praiſing for an Hour. His Parents then coming in (early on *Friday* Morning) he ſaid, " O my Mother, you will not weep to ſee me going to ſuch a lov-

ing

ing God. My Father and Mother will not be Backſliders. No; I know that God loves them, and that we ſhall all meet together in Heaven, to praiſe him to all Eternity:" Then looking on his Brother, about twelve Years old, he ſaid, "Stand off, for fear you catch the Diſtemper: For I fear you are not prepared to die. You have played away the Grace of God. The Harveſt may come, before you are renewed in the Image of God, and then how will you appear? Cry mightily to God. Strive with all your Might. Call upon him, and God will hear."

He then ſaid, "Right my Feet, that I may lie ſtraight, to reſign my Breath." When I am dead, do you ſing me all the Way, ſing my Body to the Grave, lay me by my Brother, and at the ſame Time my Spirit ſhall be joined to his, and to Ten Thouſand Times Ten Thouſand of Angels and Spirits, ſinging praiſes to God and the Lamb for ever."

16. Having ſpoken till he had no Breath left, he pauſed; and in a ſhort Time, began again, "Hear now the Words of a dying Man, a living Wonder, a Chriſtian triumphing over Death! O what a God do the Chriſtians ſerve! What a God I have ſerved! Praiſe him with me for ever. Behold the immenſe Goodneſs of our God. O that all the World knew our God! He has now made my Heart free, that I may praiſe him, and I cannot ſtop while I have Breath. Go, tell all the World of this. O Brethren! What a good God do we ſerve! Be not afraid to tell it Abroad! Go, ſhew it to all People, that they may come and ſerve him too."

When

When he ſtopt ſpeaking, the Oppreſſion on his Breaſt returned. This he took Notice of and ſaid, "While I am praiſing God, my Heart is free; but when I ceaſe, I feel this Load again. But I may well bear this; for this is all the Hell I ſhall have." Then he broke out,

"See a Soul eſcape to Bliſs,
Keep the Chriſtian Feſtival!"

"He hath waſhed me, and I am whiter than Snow. God is mine and I am God's. I ſhall ſoon be with him." Thus he continued, till he could ſpeak no more.

F I N I S.